

RESOURCES

News about nature, history and horticulture in Fairfax County

Volume 2, No.1 Spring 2001



EVERYWHERE IT'S SPRING!

"Spring in the parks is like this big overall WOW!" says Riverbend Park assistant manager Marty Smith. By late February the leaves of skunk cabbage are pushing up, sometimes through the snow. In March, bloodroot and spring beauties carpet the wintry woods like fallen stars. By April nodding light blue clusters of bluebells run riot along stream banks.

Bird migration is well under way in April and May, and warblers, finches and orioles, to name a few, arrive to nest or just pass through along the Potomac flyway. Newly hatched insects attracted by the wildflowers insure the birds food for the flight. The interdependent web of nature is seldom more evident.

This issue of *ResOURces* is devoted to the many joys of springtime, to tips on what's happening when and where. We've even added bird and flower lists on our web site (www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/ResOURces) to tell you about peak times for your favorite flowers and birds. See more information on page 5. Remember, though — it is against the law to pick the wildflowers! Let others enjoy them, too.

So go out and look at the flashes of color darting above you, the yellow-green of new leaves around you and the many-colored jewels blooming at your feet. But hurry! The ephemeral nature of spring is one of its charms. 🌸



Historic Collections Tell Fairfax's Stories

By Jeanne Nicolls, Park Authority Collections Manager

A tournament lance? Part of Fairfax County's history? Well, yes, it's one of the 6,000 items in the Park Authority's Historic Artifact Collection preserving the material culture that is representative of Fairfax County's heritage.

The lance, it turns out, is not from King Arthur's time, but from the early 20th century, when jousting was again a popular sport. In a combination of equestrian skill and athleticism, riders galloped their horses and attempted to thrust their lances through a small ring. These club-like tournaments were the inspiration for "catching the ring" on the later evolutions of carousels.

The Historic Artifact Collection encompasses the many objects from the 18th through 20th centuries associated with the early history of sites that are now parks and the families who lived and worked at these sites. It also preserves objects representing the general history, growth and development of Fairfax County and its individual communities. These items are exhibited at park sites and in special community outreach exhibits.

The Park Authority also maintains a collection of archival materials that are important in researching the history of the sites since acquisition by the Park Authority. Over 4,000 archival items document the site history and ownership and record the Authority's restoration of historic structures through photographs, maps, letters and other documents.

The two collections support the interpretative programs at the Park Authority's historic sites and in outreach exhibits. The goal is to promote visitors' enjoyment,

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Spring Surprises

Railroading During the Civil War

Ron Beavers of the Fairfax Railroad Museum Association will discuss railroads during the Civil War at the Green Spring Gardens Manor House on Saturday, April 7, from noon to 2 p.m. Discover how this crucial form of transportation helped shape the way of life of the late 19th century. Families welcome, program with dessert and tea and coffee. Reservations required, \$18 per person prepaid, at 703-941-7987.

Historic Huntley Open House

Enjoy this semi-annual opportunity on Saturday, May 12, to visit Historic Huntley, a Federal-style villa built in 1825 for Thomson F. Mason. Sponsored by Friends of Historic Huntley from 1 to 4 p.m. Call 703-768-2525 (Huntley Meadows Park) for information.

Mill Run Dulcimer Band Concert

Pick a Sunday — March 18, April 22 and/or May 20 — from 2 to 4 p.m., to picnic, lean back and smell the flowers as the Mill Run Dulcimer Band keeps your toes tapping at these free concerts at Colvin Run Mill. Donations accepted. Call CRM for more information at 703-759-2771.



Blacksmithing Lessons

The series of four lessons on Sundays from April 29 to May 20, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., covers basic ornamental blacksmith techniques through a series of projects. Safety glasses, boots, natural fiber clothing and leather gloves required. This is NOT a knife-making class. Space is limited. Must be 16 years or older to participate. Reservation required by April 22 at 703-759-2771. Cost is \$150/person. Sponsored by Friends of Colvin Run Mill.

April Fool: It's a Faux Finish!

What you see is not always as it appears. You will be amazed by all the "finishes that fool" as you tour Sully Historic Site's main house from 1 to 4 p.m. on April 1. Afterwards, try your hand at graining a sample piece of wood. Program includes guided tour of the house. Call 703-437-1794 for reservations. Costs are \$5 or less.

Farm Life at Walney

Step back in time at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park on Sunday, May 20, from 2 to 4 p.m. Relive 19th century farm life by trying your hand at chores such as splitting shingles, planting tobacco and churning butter as you visit the Walney dairy, smokehouse and gardens. And, of course, enjoy a taste of butter. Call 703-631-0013 for free reservations.

Blooms and Berries for your Landscape

Add brilliant blooms and berries to your landscape this spring with shrub and tree seedlings offered by the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. This specially selected package of 14 bare root seedlings includes indigo bush, graystem dogwood and arrowwood viburnum shrubs, plus more! Orders must be placed by April 12 and the \$16 cost must be pre-paid. Call 703-324-1460 for order forms and more information.

4-H Demonstrations

Watch goat milking, a cow getting a haircut, goats and wool being washed - while it's still on the sheep. On Wednesday, April 11, from 10 a.m. to noon or from 2 to 4 p.m., Frying Pan Park's Hoofers and Heifers livestock 4-H club will share what they have learned. The demonstrations are free.



Colvin Run Mill

The carpenter's yard is abuzz with construction and restoration activities that will continue throughout the year. Stop by and see the progress on the new wooden waterwheel and flume as they are rebuilt using 125-year-old Virginia white oak. The mill machinery will be idle during this time waiting to be revitalized.

For more information about our nature, historic and horticultural resources and directions for getting to sites, check our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks.

RESOURCES

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Circulation: Karen Temple
Production: Innovative Projects

RESOURCES is produced quarterly by the Fairfax County Park Authority. Inquiries, suggestions and comments should be addressed to Jane Scully, Editor, Resource Management Division, Suite 936, FCPA, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035-1118.

To receive your free copy of **RESOURCES**, fill out the form on the back cover or register directly on our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/resources.htm.

RESOURCES is printed on 100% recycled paper.

Ice Cream Social

Sample old-fashioned hand-turned ice cream at Frying Pan Park on Friday, June 8, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. and enjoy old-time farm games such as sack races, stilt walking, lawn bowling and three-legged races. Held at the schoolhouse. Sponsored by Katydid Day Camps. Call Frying Pan at 703-437-9101 for required prepaid reservations of \$4 per person or \$12 for a family of four.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Jane Scully

The human drive to name things, to put them in a rational order, is a basic one. Over thousands of years plants have been called many names by different peoples. These common names often are wonderfully appropriate and tell stories about local lore and herbal medicine uses of the time.

The formal system used is also helpful, even if seemingly more difficult (i.e., it's Latin). It is credited to the Swedish scientist Linnaeus, who introduced a two-part identification system of naming in the mid-18th century. In it, the second name is the *species* that describes a group of plants that are alike except for individual variations. These names can indicate a shape, like a star (*stellata*) or a characteristic, like hairy (*hirsuta*). The first name is its *genus*, or family of species that have many characteristics in common and are closely related, like violets (*Violaceae*).

The common names are often descriptive of what a plant looks like. Most wildflower fans quickly recognize a jack-in-the-pulpit, Dutchman's breeches or lady slipper because the names so fancifully match what the plant looks like. There are pussytoes, with clusters of soft flower heads that appear woolly and hairy. Early settlers called sweet little bluets — pale blue with golden yellow centers — Quaker ladies; others called them innocence.

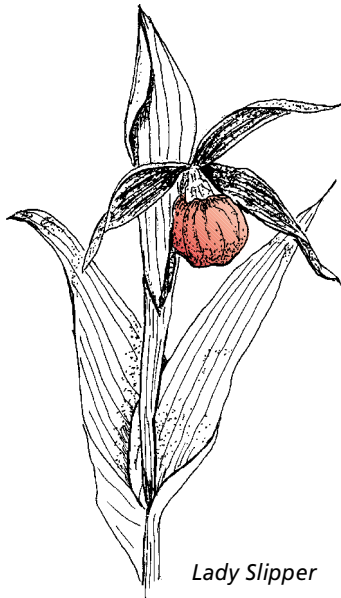
Other common names describe a plant's role. Fireweed was named for its ability to grow so quickly in areas devastated by fire. Meadowsweet, while used as an astringent and diuretic, also was strewn on the floor of banqueting houses because "the smell thereof makes the heart merrie and joyful and delighteth the senses." Virgins-bower, a climbing vine, commonly climbs over other plants and makes a shaded retreat on the edges of woods.

Perhaps most intriguing in the history of wildflowers is how tribal medicine men and early doctors used plants for medicinal purposes. While some experiments had unfortunate results, others found plants that proved to be quite useful. There developed among some practitioners a "doctrine of signatures." This belief held that medicinal plants had an external "signature" or sign that indicated its proper medical use.

It was held, for instance, that plants having heart-shaped leaves were helpful in treating diseases of the heart. Milkweed was thought to encourage the flow of milk in nursing mothers. Saxifrage — meaning stone-breaker because of its habit of growing in rocky crevices — was used for the purpose of breaking up kidney stones and gallstones. And, since the leaf of *Hepatica* was deemed to resemble the three-lobed liver of humans, it was used to treat liver ailments. While sometimes these remedies seemed to work, more often the patient's belief in their value was the most important factor.

Indians and colonists used many plants, particularly their roots, as foods as well. The Indian cucumber root indeed tastes like cucumber and was used in soups and stews. The roots of the groundnut could be sliced and cooked like potatoes, and were a staple in the diet of early Pilgrims.

There is so much lore and knowledge about wildflowers, it makes spring all the more wondrous and exciting. Go and find your own special plants to learn about; the rewards are fascinating as well as beautiful. 🌸



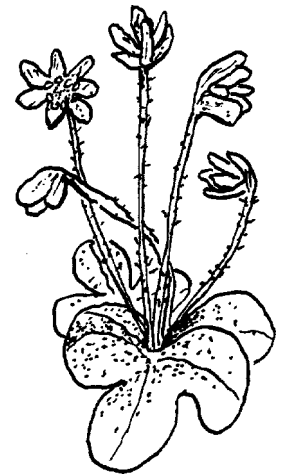
Lady Slipper



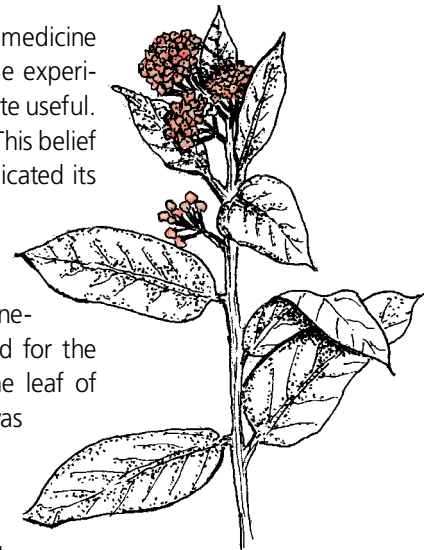
Pussy Toes



Fireweed



Hepatica



Milkweed

Wildflower Wanderings

By Mona Enquist-Johnson, Volunteer and Interpretive Services

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "The world laughs in flowers." To hear the earth giggling happily, hike along the Potomac River at Riverbend Park during the spring. Soon you'll be smiling as you behold a merry carpet of wildflowers.

I first succumbed to the infectious laughter of Riverbend's wildflowers 25 years ago and have been a spring wildflower enthusiast ever since. From late February to late May a dazzling parade of wildflowers beckons me to the park's woods and floodplain.

It's delightful to watch the progression of nature's colorful spring calendar. As some plants go to seed, others unfurl their leaves or open bright petals. Even if I miss the tiny, early rising and delicately blossomed harbinger-of-spring, I'm still able to find the brown mottling on the leaves of the trout lily and await its single, nodding yellow flower.

Spring wildflowers display a fascinating array of colors. Pale and deep shades of purple, pink, violet, blue and yellow fill the palette of flower colors. Intensity of color varies from the clear, bright sky blue of the Virginia bluebells to the light, quiet and mystical blue of the mistflower.

White is another dominant hue of early wildflowers. In April I find myself surrounded by a sea of white. Has snow returned to northern Virginia? Fortunately, no, it's a beautiful mass of the pale spring beauties covering the forest floor around me.

Color attracts my attention and entices pollinators. Wild ginger, a low-growing creeper, produces a maroon flower with three petals. The flower's rich, meaty color attracts the plant's pollinator, flies. The dark pink stripes on the white or pinkish petals of spring beauties, like the lines on a runway, direct insects to their pollination target.

Wildflowering encourages walking and bending to get a close-up look at flowers. I enhance my view further with a hand lens. Magnification of the purple dead nettle's tiny magenta flower transforms it from commonplace to royalty. Details such as the fine hairs on the stem of the early saxifrage that guard the flowers from crawling insects become more evident when enlarged.

Come explore nature's giggles at Riverbend this spring. May a new pleasure begin to bud for you! 🌸



Wild Flower Walks

The wildflower season starts early, so don't wait! This sampling of flower walks are led by expert naturalists at many sites. Even free programs (F) often need reservations (R); some suggest bringing flower field guides (FG); others require prepayment (P). Dress for the weather and check for the meeting place. Cancelled if rain.

March 31 Saturday — Introduction to Wildflowers

Learn how to identify spring wildflowers and the best places to find them through a slide show and walk from 10 am to noon at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 703/451-9588. R, F

April 7 Saturday —

Wildflower Walk — Bluets and Buttercups

Hike the rocky trails of peaceful Scotts Run Nature Preserve from 9 to 11 am to see and identify beautiful blooms. Call Riverbend Park at 703/759-9018 for meeting place and reservations. R, F

April 8 Sunday — Spring Wildflower Walk

Rediscover spring at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Walney, 703/631-0013 with a short slide show and trail walk to observe and identify wildflowers from 1:30 to 2:30 pm for ages 10 and up. R, F, FG

April 10 Tuesday — Wildflowers at Roundtree Park

Search the stream, forests and fields of Roundtree Park from 10 to 11:30 am for an abundance of native spring wildflowers. Call Hidden Oaks at 703/941-1065. R (by April 7), F

April 17 Tuesday — Bluebell Bonanza

Go for a stroll along the Bull Run River valley from 9 am to 1 pm to revel in the abundance of spring wildflowers. For those 12 years old and up. Call Hidden Oaks Nature Center

at 703/941-1065. Cost is \$6. R (by April 14); bag lunch, sturdy walking shoes.

April 21 Saturday — Lake Accotink Wildflower Walk

Join naturalist Clara Ailes for a walk from 10 to 11:30 am in search of trout lilies, hepatica, wild ginger and other wildflowers in bloom. Call Hidden Pond at 703/451-9588. R, F

April 28 Saturday — Wildflowers of the Pohick

Join Jim Pomeroy for a walk in the Pohick Stream Valley. Catch the last of the spring bloomers before the leaves of the forest canopy close off the sun from the woodland floor. R, F

May 5 Saturday — Lilies and Bells along the Riverbend

Search the riverside for a lovely display of trout lilies, bluebells, trilliums and other jewels. From 9 to 11 a.m. for adults, from the visitor center. R, F

May 27 Sunday — Green Spring Native Plant Trail

Walk the native plant trail from 1 to 3 pm with an interpreter from the Virginia Native Plant Society and discover the spring ephemerals. Call Green Spring Horticultural Center at 703/642-5174. R, P \$18 per person.



Spring Bird Outings

Your parks offer a wide sampling of birding opportunities this spring, complete with guides and naturalists. Most are free (F) but reservations (R) required. Bring binoculars (B) and field guides and dress for the weather. Trips are cancelled in rain. Enjoy!

Weekly Monday Morning Bird Walk along Accotink Stream Valley to look for warblers, owls and hawks. From 7 to 9 am at Eakin Community Park. Call 703/941-1065 (Hidden Oaks Nature Center). B, F

March 11 Sunday and April 22 Sunday — Birding for Beginners from 7 to 10 am at the Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703/768-2525. R, F

March 12 Monday — Jr. River Rats — Birds and Nests Birdhouse building and bird lore for 6-to-8 year-olds from 2:30 to 3:30 pm at Riverbend Visitor Center, 703/759-9018. Cost is \$5 per child. R

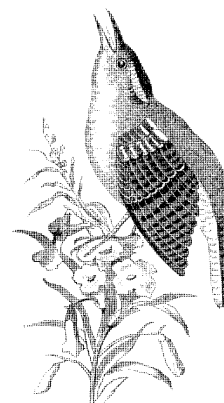
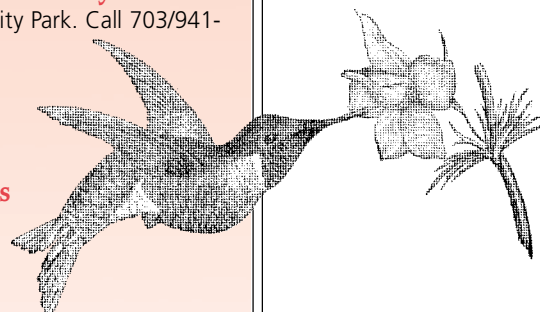
March 13 Tuesday and April 10 Tuesday — Woodland and Field Bird Hike for 12-year-olds and up, from 8 to 9:30 am at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Walney, 703/631-0013. B, R, F

April 29 Sunday — Peak Migration Period Bird Hike and Bagels for adults, from 7 to 10:30 am at Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703/768-2525. Cost is \$4. B, R

May 1 Tuesday — Spring Bird Count for 14-year-olds and up. Come one, come all! The count runs from 7 to 9 am at Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 703/941-1065. Assist park staff with the spring bird count for Annandale District Park. B, R, F

May 5 Saturday — Two-Mile Bird Hike for 10-year-olds and up, from 8 to 10:30 am at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Walney, 703/631-0013. See and hear colorful spring migrant and resident songbirds over varied terrain. B, R, F

May 9 Wednesday — Migrating Warbler and Songbird Walk for adults, from 8 to 10 am at Riverbend Visitor Center, 703/759-9018. B (and wear boots), R, F



Bird Magic at Huntley Meadows

By Jane Scully, Stewardship Communications

Spring at Huntley Meadows is a magical time of sights and sounds when the waterfowl of late winter mingle with the migrating warblers and returning nesting birds. It is an orchestra of sounds, melodious to harsh, from the nasal fish crow and raucous red-winged blackbird to the sweet liquid call of the water thrush. Frogs, great and small, croak and peep and splash.

Huntley's 1,428 acres of diverse habitats include meadows, wetlands and forests. The abundant bird life draws thousands of bird watchers to the park each year. As with Riverbend the lush combination of trees, bushes, flowers and grasses combine to create this haven for insects, animals and birds in their interactive rituals of renewal and birth.

Walk through the trails and onto the boardwalk to see a kaleidoscope of colors from the dramatic red-and-black of a scarlet tanager to the brilliant goldfinch in breeding plumage. Compare the incomparable blues of the indigo bunting, the eastern bluebird and the barn swallow.

Stand on the boardwalk and watch chimney swifts, like flying cigars, dart over the ponds hunting insects. Watch the great blue herons change from statues of ancient design to piercing fish-hunters in a single downward motion. Glimpse a ruby-throated hummingbird as it pauses for a nanosecond to drink from long-necked flowers whose nectar only it can reach.

This spring *ResOURces* has created a web site combining park site bird lists and plant lists that lets you (<http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/ResOURces>) that allows you to search for birds by type, by site, by habitat, by color and by season. We will be adding information on other sites over time. On the Huntley Meadows home page (<http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/huntley.htm>), you can click on the "Reflections" page to check current happenings there and to e-mail us your own sightings. Together we can build the most-complete and effective checklists of birds found throughout the county parks. Good birding! 🌸



► **Historic Collections** *continued from page 1*

understanding and appreciation of Fairfax County's material heritage and its historic resources. The Park Authority follows the highest professional museum standards of stewardship in protecting and maintaining this important legacy.

Some of the Historic Artifacts Collection objects are exhibited on site, such as 18th-century furniture owned by Richard Bland Lee, Northern Virginia's first congressman and original owner of Sully. They include a sofa, card, sewing and Pembroke tables and two American Hepplewhite heartback chairs.

At Colvin Run Mill, photographs of the Millard family, the miller's desk, mill receipts and grain sacks, a family bible and an apron belonging to Emma Millard represent objects associated with the mill. The collection contains early photographs of Green Spring and documents relating to prior owners; original photographs, documents, family letters and accounts pertain to other historic structures and sites.

Some collection objects relate less to a specific site and more to the history of the county. A sampling of objects includes a log cabin quilt, a biscuit block, blacksmith and milling tools, a mid-19th century coiled rye straw basket attributed to local African-Americans, and a broom machine used by a blind man from the early 20th century Colvin Run community.

The collection also cares for objects from community organizations, such as memorabilia from local Grange meetings and hymnals from Frying Pan Spring Meeting House. Civil War era maps, engravings and artifacts are reminders of wartime events that occurred across Fairfax County.

The Historic Artifact Collection has been fortunate in receiving some outstanding gifts in the past few years. They include a pair of side chairs that belonged to Jacob Haight, mid-19th century owner of Sully, a wood stove and a Hoosier cabinet from a 1935 Fairfax County farmhouse. Other notable additions are a marriage certificate and a Civil War-era sword from the Clark family; memorabilia from the Sherman family of Ash Grove; a collection of 18th and 19th folk art assembled by two Fairfax County artists; and two early 20th-century "Fairfax Farms Dairy" milk bottles.

The Park Authority is always interested in preserving materials associated with its park sites and with Fairfax County history. To initiate the acquisition process or to request research access to the collection, please contact the Collections Manager at 703-631-1429. Also, volunteers are needed to help with the annual inventory of the collection, install special exhibits and catalog, clean and store historic artifacts. Interested? Please call the collections office to learn more about training and participation. 🦋

Victorian Day at Sully

Celebrate Sully's Victorian past on May 6 with activities from the late 19th century. Learn games of the period including the ever-popular "Puss Puss in the Corner" and hear the popular music of the day. Consider your well-equipped kitchen as you learn about the labor-intensive work of open-hearth cooking.

Then watch our model dress in all the layers required to achieve the proper Victorian shape. A fashion show will feature a variety of styles during the era of England's longest-reigning monarch.

A puppet theatre at Sully for the occasion will recreate a popular entertainment form from the time of Victoria and Albert. Make a Victorian greeting card adorned with ribbons and lace. To complete your visit, request an audience with our own "Queen Victoria," and hear a story told by Mother Goose.

Victorian Day will run from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 6. The cost is \$6 for adults, \$5 for students and \$4 for seniors and children. 🦋

Keeping in Touch!

Communication and Correspondence in Early America, 1750-1860

Without cell phones, telephones or e-mail, how did early Americans maintain long-distance contacts? Five actors and presenters explore the "no tech" ways people managed to keep abreast of the latest news, conduct business and maintain connections with distant family and friends at a full-day symposium on March 30 at George Mason University in Fairfax.

Find out more about this annual historical seminar by contacting the Park Authority's Collections Manager at 703-631-1429 or 703-708-0861 or e-mail susan.clark@co.fairfax.va.us. The cost is \$50 for all sessions and lunch and registrations must be postmarked by March 16, 2001. 🦋

Volunteerism Goes International

By Erin Chernisky, Volunteer Coordinator

Hello? Kofi Anon calling . . .

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers (IYV), in recognition of the ever-increasing need for voluntary service to help address issues throughout the world. IYV 2001 provides a unique opportunity to highlight the achievements of the millions of volunteers worldwide and to encourage more people globally to engage in volunteer activity.

Locally, hundreds have already taken up this global call to action by volunteering their time and talents to make a difference in Fairfax County parks. Claudia Centeno, a native of Mexico, came to Colvin Run Mill two years ago hoping to improve her English while volunteering her graphic design skills. With creative juices flowing, Centeno publishes the monthly newsletter and designs many promotional pieces for the park.

Across the county, Andy Higgs can be found bright and early Monday mornings leading the public on his popular bird walks through Huntley Meadows Park. Higgs has been meticulously recording his wildlife observations over the past 15 years, which serve as an invaluable resource management tool for the park.

Park volunteers come from all walks of life, range in age from teens to seniors, and have a variety of skills and amounts of time to donate. Some lead nature programs, others give tours of historic properties, and many lend a hand at the front desk.

Thinking about volunteering? This is the year to start and your parks need you! A little effort from a lot of people can go a long way to preserve and protect Fairfax County's natural and cultural resources.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities with the Fairfax County Park Authority, call Erin Chernisky at 703-324-8750 or visit <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/volunteer>. We look forward to having you join us during the International Year of Volunteers! 🦋

NATIVE PLANTS: RIGHT AT HOME

By Laura Bannister, Friends of Riverbend Park

Are you thinking about landscaping your home, but find the plant choices overwhelming? Do you want to provide a natural habitat for birds and butterflies, but don't have time for lots of maintenance? Do you want healthy, happy plants, but feel reluctant about using chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides? If you are

NATIVE PLANT SALE

On Saturday, April 28, from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., the Friends of Riverbend Park will hold their first annual Native Plant Sale in downtown Great Falls. Your purchases support this gem of a park and give you native plants that are hard to find in commercial nurseries.

answering yes, if this describes your dilemma in planning a garden, then you should incorporate native plants into your outdoor design.

Native plants are those flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees that grow in the region in which they evolved. They are naturally suited for an area and require minimal maintenance and watering once established. Most species are perennial or self-seeding. And they are the natural shelter and food of native and migrating songbirds, for wildlife and butterflies whose habitat is increasingly being destroyed by urban development.

Through the process of adaptation, native plants survive conditions that are common in our area. These include the fluctuations in rainfall and temperature; deficiencies in the soils; and the diseases that weaken and kill their alien coun-

terparts. There are many species that can be planted directly into unamended soil.

By planting indigenous plants, you can greatly reduce the amount of pollutants entering our waterways, while concurrently reducing water consumption. Native plants have long ago developed ways to insure their own survival. For example, native plants often attract insects that prey upon pests, thus decreasing the need for pesticide use. Pesticides are harmful to both the gardener and the environment and can lead to contamination of rivers and lakes.

Once established, native plants also do not require fertilizers. Nitrogen and phosphorus, the main components of fertilizers, run off into lakes, rivers and estuaries, causing algae blooms and depletion of oxygen in our waters. At the same time, native plants require less water than the traditional lawn. In urban areas on the East Coast, lawn irrigation uses as much as 30 percent of all water consumed.

People who include natives in the design of their landscape have not only an admirable relationship with nature, but one with history as well. The native plants were here before western civilization and give us a glimpse of the plants that fed, healed, housed and were enjoyed by the first Americans.

Your landscape can speak loudly of the principles that are important to you, whether they be lower maintenance, greater habitat for indigenous wildlife, water conservation and reduced pollution, historic preservation — or just the plain beauty of our wonderful spectrum of native species.



Celebrate Wetlands At Huntley on May 6


Moments outside of the human world in the shallows of a marsh with red-winged blackbirds calling and the wind rustling in the cattails or reedgrass, or a solitary spell at the edge of a swamp on the edge of winter — these will bring intimations of the spirit that moves with the water, the light, and the life of the marsh.

— from David M. Carroll's
Swampwalker's Journal,
A Wetlands Year

Wetlands are indeed worthy of celebration. Thirty-five percent of all endangered animals and plants depend on them. They filter impurities and recharge groundwater supplies. And wetlands are places of wild beauty where people can find retreat and be recharged as well.

The first Sunday in May is a very special day, however, because that is the day Huntley Meadows Park invites everyone to celebrate wetlands at a fun-filled event called Wetlands Awareness Day. The May 6 celebration is held from noon until 3 pm.

Enthusiastic and knowledgeable park volunteers will be stationed along the ½ mile boardwalk and observation tower to show you a heron through a spotting scope, point out beaver lodges and provide answers for all kinds of questions. A wetlands-inspired Fun Fair provides entertainment and games; face painting is very popular with the young and not-so-young.

Join in the festivities on May 6 and show your support for wetlands! 



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YOUR PARKS

Here are some of the parks where spring is at its finest!

- ✂ **Ellanor C. Lawrence Park**
5040 Walney Road, Chantilly
Call 703/631-0013
- ✂ **Sully Historic Site**
Sully Road, Chantilly
Call 703/437-1794
- ✂ **Green Spring Gardens Park**
4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria
Call 703/642-5173
- ✂ **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**
7701 Royce Street, Annandale
Call 703/941-1065
- ✂ **Hidden Pond Nature Center**
8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield
Call 703/451-9588
- ✂ **Huntley Meadows Park**
3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria
Call 703/768-2525
- ✂ **Riverbend Park**
8700 Potomac Hills Street
Great Falls
Call 703/759-9018
- ✂ **Colvin Run Mill**
10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls
Call 703/759-2771
- ✂ **Frying Pan Park**
2709 West Ox Road, Herndon
Call 703/437-9101
- ✂ **Scotts' Run Nature Preserve**
7400 Georgetown Pike, McLean
Call 703/759-3211
- ✂ **Roundtree Park**
3320 Annandale Road, Falls Church
- ✂ **Lake Accotink Park**
7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield
Call 703/569-3464

Need directions? More information?
 Visit us online at: www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks

Spring Surprises

✂ **Create a natural wildlife sanctuary** in your own yard for birds and butterflies! A wildlife gardening workshop at the Walney Visitor Center at ECLP from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 28 will help you plan your own plot, teach you about some easy-care plants, then provide a little hands-on training. Call 703-631-0013 to register.

✂ The **Fifth Annual Walk-a-Thon** at Frying Pan Park will be held Sunday, April 29, from 1 to 3 p.m. to raise money for new playground equipment. Bring the family and enjoy the one-hour walk around the well-marked three-mile route. Call the park at 703-437-9101 for registration materials and pledge forms.

✂ **Celebrate May Day** by heading to Linden, VA, for Hidden Oaks' **Trillium Trek**. See the glorious display of trilliums and other spring wildflowers found there. The trip is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., so bring a bag lunch. Wear hiking shoes since there is a moderate hike on rocky trail. Call Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 703-941-1065, for *reservations by April 28*. The cost is \$10.

✂ **Tour the Frying Pan Meeting House** on Saturday, May 12, either from 10 to 11 a.m. or 1 to 2 p.m. From 1791 to 1982

these four simple walls witnessed religious services, historic events, community social life, human drama and Civil War battles. Also tour one of the area's oldest cemeteries. Get information and reservations from Frying Pan Park, 703-437-9101.

✂ **Journey to the tidal marshes** of the Delaware Bay on Friday, May 18, at the peak of bird migration to view shorebirds, waterfowl, eagles and many other birds feasting on horseshoe crab eggs. The special all-day trip is \$20 and is organized by Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 703-941-1065. *Reservations are required by May 15.*

✂ **A Civil War Encampment** takes place at Colvin Run Mill on Sunday, May 6, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Virginia 49th Infantry and their families encamp on the grounds. Period drill and firing demonstrations will take place throughout the day. FREE. Tour cost separate.

✂ Yes, it's time again for the famous **Green Spring Gardens Spring Plant Sale!** Held Saturday, May 19, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the event offers rare and unusual plants, native plants, perennials and shrubs for northern Virginia gardens from quality vendors. It's a true garden of delights! Free.

✂ **The kayaks are coming!** After overwhelming requests, kayak tours along the Potomac will begin at Riverbend in June. One person per kayak, age 15 and up, and great staff leadership. Watch this space in the next issue for the tour schedule and how to reserve your memorable trip!



Fairfax, Virginia
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